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ANCIENT MUSIC OF IRELAND.

A GREAT and truly national work—the Ancient Music of Ireland—collected and arranged for the piano-forte by Edward Bunting, has just issued from the Dublin press; and whether we consider its intrinsic merits, the beauty of its typography and binding, or the liberal and enterprising spirit of its publishers, they are all equally deserving of the highest approbation. This is indeed a work of which Ireland may feel truly proud, for, though in every respect Irish, we believe nothing equal to it in its way has hitherto appeared in the British empire, and we trust that all the parties concerned in its production will receive the rewards to which they are so justly entitled. To all lovers of national melody this work will give the most intense pleasure; while by those who think there is no melody so sweet and touching as that of Ireland, it will be welcomed with feelings of delight which no words could adequately express. It is a work which assuredly will never die. To its venerable Editor, Ireland owes a deep feeling of gratitude, as the zealous and enthusiastic collector and preserver of her music in all its characteristic beauty; for though our national poet, Moore, has contributed by the peculiar charm of his verses to extend the fame of our music over the civilized world, it should never be forgotten that it is to Bunting that is due the merit of having originally rescued from obscurity those touching strains of melody, the effect of which, even upon the hearts of those most indifferent to Irish interests generally, Moore has so feelingly depicted in his well-known lines:—

“The stranger shall hear thy lament on his plains;
The sighs of thy harp shall be sent o’er the deep;
Thill thy masters themselves, as they rivet thy chains,
Shall pause at the song of their captive, and weep.”

The merits of this work are, however, of a vastly higher order than those of either of the former collections which Mr Bunting gave to the world; for, while the melodies are of equal beauty, they are arranged with such exquisite musical feeling and skill as to enhance that beauty greatly; and we do not hesitate to express our conviction that there is not any musician living who could have harmonized them with greater judgment or feeling. This volume contains above one hundred and sixty melodies, and of these only a few have been previously made known to the public. It also contains an interesting preface, and a most valuable dissertation on the ancient music of Ireland, in which its characteristic peculiarities are admirably analysed; and on the method of playing the Harp; the Musical Vocabulary of the old Irish Harpers; a Treatise on the Antiquity of the Harp and Bagpipe in Ireland by Samuel Ferguson, Esq., M.R.I.A., full of curious antiquarian lore, and in which is comprised an account of the various efforts made to revive the Irish Harp; a dissertation by Mr Petrie on the true age of the Harp, popularly called the Harp of Brian Boru; and, lastly, anecdotes of the most distinguished Irish Harpers of the last two centuries, collected by the Editor himself. To these are added, Remarks on the Antiquity and Authors of the Tunes when ascertained, with copious indices, giving their original Irish names, as well as the names and localities of the persons from whom they were obtained. The work is illustrated with numerous wood-cuts, as well as with copperplate engravings of the ancient Irish Harp above alluded to. This slight notice will, it is hoped, give our readers for the present some idea of the value and importance of this delightful work; but we shall return to it again and again, for we consider it is no less than our duty to make its merits familiar to our readers, as our music is a treasure of which all classes of our countrymen should feel equally proud, and in the honour of extending the celebrity of which they should all feel equally desirous to participate. P.

SIMPLICITY OF CHARACTER.

Dr Barrett having on a certain occasion detected a student walking in the Fellows' Garden, Trinity College, Dublin, asked him how he had obtained admission. “I jumped over the library, sir,” said the student. “D’ye see me now, sir?—you are telling me an infernal lie, sir!” exclaimed the Vice-Provost. “Lie, sir!” echoed the student; “I’ll do it again!” and forthwith proceeded to button his coat, in apparent preparation for the feat; when the worthy doctor, seizing his arm, prevented him, exclaiming with horror, “Stop, stop—you’ll break your bones if you attempt it!”

TO OUR READERS.

THE want of a cheap literary publication for the great body of the people of this country, suited to their tastes and habits, combining instruction with amusement, avoiding the exciting and profitless discussion of political or polemical questions, and placed within the reach of their humble means, has long been matter of regret to those reflecting and benevolent minds who are anxious for the advancement and civilization of Ireland—and the reflection has been rather a humiliating one, that while England and Scotland abound with such cheap publications—for in London alone there are upwards of twenty weekly periodicals sold at one penny each—Ireland, with a population so extensive, and so strongly characterised by a thirst for knowledge, has not even one work of this class. It is impossible to believe that such an anomaly can have originated in any other cause than the want of spirit and enterprise on the part of those who ought to have the patriotism to endeavour to enlighten their countrymen, and thereby elevate their condition, even although the effort should be attended with risk, and trouble to themselves.

It may be objected that some of the cheap publications already and for some years in existence, though in all respects fitted for the instruction of the people, and enjoying such an extensive circulation in the Sister Island as they justly deserve, have never obtained that proportionate share of popularity here which would indicate a conviction of their usefulness or excellence on the part of the Irish people. But the obvious reply to this objection is, that, undeniable as the merits of many of these publications must be allowed to be, none of them were adapted to the intellectual wants of a people, distinguished, as the Irish are, by strong peculiarities of mind and temperament, as well as by marked national predilections—and who, being more circumscribed in their means than the inhabitants of the Sister Countries, necessarily required a stimulus more powerful to excite them. A work of a more amusing character, and more essentially Irish, was therefore necessary; and such a work it is now intended to offer to the Public.

THE IRISH PENNY JOURNAL will be in a great degree devoted to subjects connected with the history, literature, antiquities, and general condition of Ireland, but it will not be devoted to such subjects exclusively; it will contain, in a fair proportion, articles on home and foreign manufactures, information on the arts and sciences, and useful knowledge generally.

All subjects tending in the remotest degree to irritate or offend political or religious feelings will be rigidly abstained from, and every endeavour will be made to diffuse sentiments of benevolence and mutual good-will through all classes of the community.

The matter will also be, to a considerable extent, original—and to render it so, contributions will be obtained from a great number of the most eminent literary and scientific writers of whom Ireland can boast.

A publication thus conducted, and, as may be confidently anticipated, displaying merits of a very superior order, while it will effect its primary object of conveying instruction to the people generally, will at the same time, it is hoped, be found not undeserving of the support of the higher and more educated classes; while to the inhabitants of Great Britain it will be found extremely interesting, as embodying a large amount of information respecting Ireland, and the manners of her people as they really exist, and not as they have been hitherto too frequently misrepresented and caricatured.

To give to such a work a reasonable prospect of success, it is indeed essential that it should be patronised by all classes; and an appeal is therefore confidently made to the high-minded and patriotic people of Ireland in its behalf, as without a very extensive circulation it could not be given at so low a price as would bring it within the reach of the poorer classes of the country, whose limited means would preclude the possibility of purchasing a dearer publication.

On their own parts, the Proprietors of the IRISH PENNY JOURNAL have only to observe, that no efforts shall be spared to render their Work deserving of general support; and that as their expectations of immediate success are not extravagant, they will not be deterred, by temporary discouragements in the commencement of their undertaking, from persevering in their exertions to establish, upon a firm basis of popularity, a publication of such merit in itself, and so essential, as they conceive, to the improvement and advantage of the people of Ireland.

THE IRISH PENNY JOURNAL will be published every Saturday morning at the Office of the GENERAL ADVERTISER, Church-lane, College-green. It will be printed upon fine paper, and each Number will be embellished with at least one Wood-cut Illustration of high character as a work of art; and in point of quality as well as quantity of letter-press, it will be inferior to no Publication of the kind that has hitherto appeared.